



m&e case study

GreenChoice: #19 Promoting sustainable production



GreenChoice provides a collaborative platform for learning and action, promoting wise resource use across supply chains in the agricultural and fisheries sectors in South Africa by:

- **Building learning networks among projects**
- **Supporting producer focused initiatives**
- **Engaging with markets and consumers**

The C.A.P.E partnership aims to share knowledge and build learning relationships. A good example of the power of the partnership to harness resources for new areas of work is the establishment of GreenChoice. This national alliance promoting sustainable production grew out of a C.A.P.E. task team. Several of the early projects supported by C.A.P.E involved the establishment of business and biodiversity initiatives in various agricultural and fisheries industries.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A COORDINATING BODY

Following a business and biodiversity day at the 2006 C.A.P.E. Conference, a need for a roundtable where lessons could be shared was identified and the C.A.P.E business and biodiversity task team was established. The coverage of this task team was rapidly expanded with the assistance of SANBI to include bioregional programmes and projects in other parts of the country. It soon became evident that there was a need to provide a formal forum to share learning and coordinate engagement with retailers. GreenChoice was established in May 2008. It comprises a large number of industry-based initiatives, supported by a central secretariat which is staffed by WWF-SA and Conservation International. It supports the development of improved production methods, and educates retailer and consumer choice.

- The objectives of Green Choice are to:
- Support and scale up sustainable agricultural and fisheries initiatives.
- Promote links between agriculture, poverty alleviation and conservation.
- Encourage uptake of better management practices by producers.
- Develop marketing mechanisms and incentives for sustainable practice.
- Establish mechanisms for information sharing and technical support.
- Support research on barriers and incentives.
- Coordinate a communications campaign promoting a clear business case.

GreenChoice is a partnership created to support sustainable production. It provides a single entry point for those wanting to promote sustainable (particularly biodiversity-responsible) production. Changing behavior at the production level often requires a complex series of incentives at retail and consumer levels. The innovative industry-based projects it promotes, together with its support from the conservation community, lend it credibility as it engages with producers, retailers and the public.

GreenChoice facilitates learning between projects through forums and learning exchanges. For example, in June 2008 GreenChoice convened a forum which gave producers, retailers and conservationists an opportunity to identify common barriers and potential solutions. In addition, a learning exchange was organized at Flower Valley, one of the well established projects. The diversity of participants, which included farmers, agricultural authorities and conservationists, encouraged lively and informative debate.

GreenChoice attends production sector meetings in order to promote sustainable production, with a central biodiversity message. Another focus has been alignment of guidelines across sectors to ensure that a consistent message is conveyed. The GreenChoice secretariat has helped to coordinate initiatives within the same sector, thereby eliminating duplication. This has prevented confusion which could be caused, for example, by the presence of a variety of eco-labels for the same product. A workshop was held in early 2009, for example, with all those involved in sustainable red meat initiatives nationally.

The presence of a coordinating body for sustainable production has helped to facilitate engagement with large retailers such as Woolworths, Pick 'n Pay and MassMart. Finally, the secretariat has provided a useful focal point for connecting potential donors with suitable projects.



INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

The projects included in the GreenChoice partnership vary from those being newly formed, to others which have been running for several years with successfully established certification and marketing programmes. The latter group includes:



Contact details:

Tatjana von Boormann
WWF-SA

Tel: +27 21 799 8852
tvboormann@wwf.org.za

Sophie Susman
Conservation International
Tel: +27 21 789 2583
s.susman@conservation.org

www.greenchoice.co.za
www.capeaction.org.za/index.php?C=bio&P=4

The Biodiversity and Wine Initiative: This project has aligned its biodiversity certification with the existing industry sustainability certification scheme (Integrated Production of Wine) and has worked with the official industry marketing arm to create a biodiversity brand as a unique selling point for South African wine.

Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative: To promote compliance with laws protecting overharvested fish, this initiative has created a cellphone-accessed, colour-coded, species list:

- green= healthy stocks, can be eaten freely
- orange = legal, but cause for concern
- red = illegal to sell, stocks have collapsed.

Wild Cut Flowers: Flower Valley has facilitated the development of a scientifically based permit system, which their commercial arm, Fynsa, is using in the marketing of sustainably harvested wild flowers.

Badger Friendly Honey: Improved management practices have reduced conflict between beekeepers and badgers. Beekeepers in areas where honey badgers are found apply these measures and receive a conservation-endorsed logo.

Other projects in the pipeline include the production of:

- potatoes which ensure economic advantage for the producer and benefit to threatened habitats
- rooibos tea which does not involve clearing mountain terrain and the planting of a monoculture
- sugar which is farmed according to better management practices
- pecan nuts produced from trees which are farmed along social and environmental guidelines
- citrus which uses water efficiently, and avoids the ploughing up of priority conservation areas
- wool which meets specified sustainability requirements
- wildlife-friendly products: the Fair Game brand which incentivises farmers to use non-lethal control methods for problem animals
- meat (beef, game and lamb), produced on sustainably grazed veld and with the use of non-lethal predator-control methods
- ostrich bred in controlled small camps to prevent large scale irreversible overgrazing of fragile veld.

All these initiatives promote best practice production through farm level interventions: They aim to help farmers who 'want to do it right', they audit whether this is happening and then reward good practice through marketing support and identification of other potential incentives (such as improved ecosystem management that supports production, or payments for ecosystem services and tax breaks). In addition to the monitoring which occurs within individual projects, GreenChoice has commissioned an overarching review of all existing projects to determine their impact, efficiency and options to achieve sustainability.

The establishment of GreenChoice, with its forums, learning exchanges, research projects, information sharing networks and websites, has improved communication and efficiency within this area. It has increased market awareness of the importance of making a commitment to green choices, at both corporate and personal levels.

Date: April 2009

Key Words:

Eco-labels, accreditation schemes, certification, sustainable production, better management practices, business and biodiversity